



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

---

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Michael Petterson MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

**Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT**

**Submission Number: 135**

**Date Authorised for Publication: 27 February 2019**

## Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

### Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT

Submission from:

Dr Sue Meek

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the implementation of drone delivery systems in the ACT. While I applaud the ACT Government for its proactive and progressive stance with regard to renewable energy, I see no reason for it to be seduced by the implied accolade of drone manufacturers that the ACT would acquire some sort of kudos by becoming early adopters of this invasive, consumption-driven technology.

I concede that there may be some circumstances when drone deliveries may have a valuable contribution to make, particularly with regard to emergency deliveries for life saving or health preserving reasons and perhaps for some limited one off commercial purposes. (I am thinking for example of plumber who never seem to have the right fitting for the repair they have been asked to make being able to make a request for this to be delivered rather than driving to and from the supply point.)

However, where delivery requirements can be foreseen, such as grocery orders, then I believe these should continue to be aggregated and dispatched via optimum transport routes by van or truck. These should be electrically powered as soon as possible – removing the counter-arguments of carbon based fuel burning and noise pollution.

In contrast I contend that no amount of technology development will remove the noise pollution associated with drones and they will invade neighbour's personal space in a way that road deliveries never could due to the overhead hovering required (see also privacy concerns discussion below).

In this context I am particularly appalled by the prospect of 'convenience shopping', such as pizza or coffee deliveries, by drone. I am sure this is very attractive for drone operating companies as it would increase the volume of traffic and improve the economics of their business. Nevertheless, such a substantial imposition on many for the transient gratification of a few is unacceptable and should NOT be permitted.

The widespread use of drones in unpredictable geographic and temporal patterns would be likely to have a devastating effect on wildlife (particularly birds) and be distressing for many, if not all, domestic animals. I have been impressed that parks and wildlife services both here and overseas have recognised their adverse impacts upon environmental protection and people's enjoyment of

these spaces and been quick to ban their use. Urban (human and non-human) inhabitants deserve no less.

Furthermore the fact that drones carry cameras and fly at a much lower levels than satellites raises very significant privacy concerns. Who will have access to the recorded data (which will presumably have to be stored for performance monitoring, proof of delivery etc)? How will it be protected? The potential for intended and unintended surveillance activities and misuse of the data is extremely worrying.

I note that the Inquiry's TOR (b) seeks information on the positive economic impacts of drone delivery technology. Careful consideration should also be given to its disruptive effects. I am confident that far fewer people would work in a drone delivery depot than currently provide courier and delivery services. What price 'efficiency'?

**In summary, while there may be a few specific and limited circumstances where drones may be reasonably and valuably deployed their widespread use for commercial deliveries, particularly in domestic situations, is undesirable and unacceptable for the reasons outlined above.**